

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 17-20 and 23-32 are pending. Claims 1-16, 21, and 22 have been canceled without prejudice. Claims 17, 18, and 23-26 have been amended. New claims 27-32 have been added. The specification and drawings have also been amended to correct minor informalities. No new matter has been introduced. Applicants believe the claims comply with 35 U.S.C. § 112.

Applicants note with appreciation the indicated allowability of claims 25 and 26 if rewritten in independent form and amended to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112. Claims 25 and 26 have been rewritten accordingly, and are thus believed to be allowable.

Claims 17-20, 23, and 24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Church et al.

Independent claims 17 and 18 are novel and patentable over Church et al. because, for instance, Church et al. does not teach or suggest attaching firmly a workpiece holding device for installing said workpiece to an angle adjustment mechanism and attaching firmly a reciprocating motion drive unit mounting said angle adjustment mechanism to a bridge provided so as to stride said lapping plate, to enhance rigidity between a surface of said workpiece to be lapped and a surface of said lapping plate. See, e.g., page 34, lines 10-19. By enhancing the rigidity between the surface of the workpiece to be lapped and the surface of the lapping plate, even during the reciprocating motion of the workpiece and the rotating motion of the lapping plate, the relative positional relationship between the surface of the workpiece to be lapped and the surface of the lapping plate are kept without changing. As a result, it is possible to lap the workpiece, i.e., the air bearing surface of the magnetic head with high accuracy and good reproductivity, thereby achieving the significant effect of lowering the cost of the magnetic head.

In contrast, Church et al. merely discloses lapping the surface of the magnetic head by the rotating motion of the lapping machine and the reciprocating motion of the

workpiece as the lapping method of the magnetic head. There is no teaching or suggestion, and indeed no necessity, of ensuring the rigidity between the surface of the workpiece to be lapped and the surface of the lapping plate for lapping the magnetic head with high accuracy. Church et al. does not disclose any mechanism for firmly attaching the components as claimed to ensure the rigidity between the surface of the workpiece to be lapped and the surface of the lapping plate for lapping the magnetic lead with high accuracy.

For at least the foregoing reasons, independent claim 17 and claims 19, 23, 29, and 31 depending therefrom, and independent claim 18 and claims 20, 25, 30, and 32 depending therefrom, are allowable.

Applicants respectfully assert that new independent claims 27 and 28 are patentable because, for instance, the cited references do not disclose or suggest that when the workpiece is brought close to and in contact with the surface of the lapping plate, the lapping plate is not rotated and the workpiece is reciprocated prior to lapping operation, subsequently lapping operation being performed by the sliding motion of the workpiece on the lapping surface plate by bringing the workpiece into contact with the lapping plate, and at the time when lapping operation is finished, the workpiece is separated from the lapping plate while the reciprocating motion of the workpiece is maintained. Church et al., for example, discloses lapping the surface of the magnetic head by the rotating motion of the lapping machine and the reciprocating motion of the workpiece, and is devoid of any teaching or suggestion for the claimed feature.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 650-326-2400.

Respectfully submitted,



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FIG. 14A

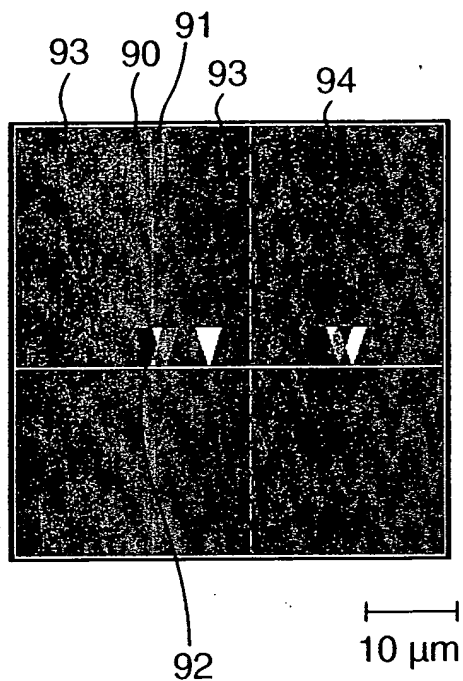


FIG. 14C

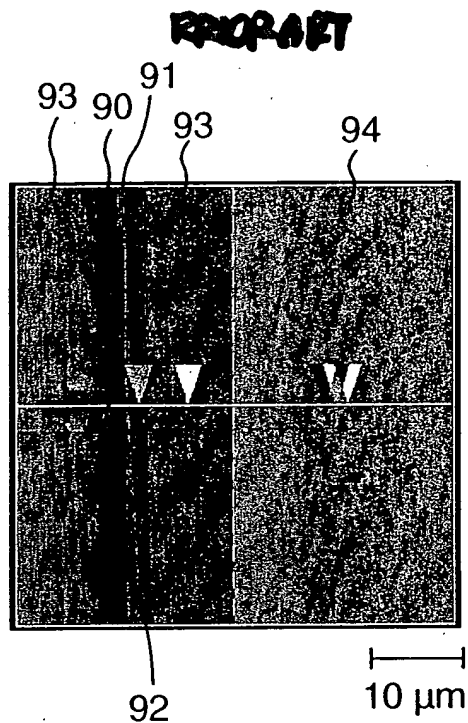


FIG. 14B

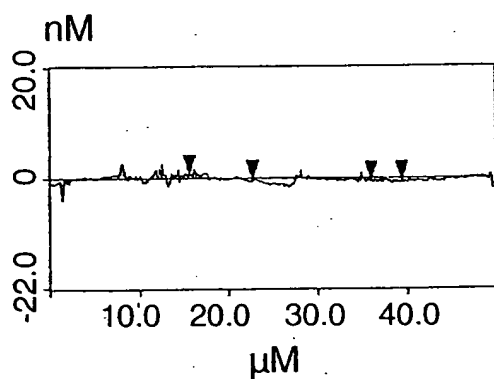


FIG. 14D

